

NEW YEAR'S DAY

Its Entrance Has Been Celebrated for Many Years.

Custom of Calling Originated With Dutch in New York State—Reception by President an Annual Occasion.

THE celebration of the entrance of a New Year has been observed with much ceremony in this country ever since the beginning of our Republic. President Washington was the first to establish the custom, and at his Philadelphia residence, during his first administration, it has been noted that the day was observed with appropriate ceremonies, with a light repast in the afternoon, including a plum cake baked by Martha Washington herself, and some temperance punch, made chiefly of lemons and sugar, minus any intoxicating ingredients.

The custom of New Year's calling originated in this country with the Dutch in New York state. The nature of the day, the clearing off of old accounts and the hopeful beginning of the new trial of life, made New Year's day a day for the interchange of friendly greetings, and in no country more than in this has the friendly visiting crystallized into such a hard and fast business.

In the South, in the early days, that land where social life is as delightful and spontaneous in its growth as is the flora of the region, New Year's day was formerly observed as the great time for coming out. The debutante burst into blossom on that day, the old homesteads were thrown open, and the social world, like the huge family, met to exchange greetings and good cheer.

On New Year's day the observance in Washington takes on the form of diplomatic and political observances, when conveyances from all over the city start moving toward the White House for their occupants to pay their respects to the president and other dignitaries of our government.

When the general custom of celebrating the first of the year by the parading of New Year clubs in fantastic costumes, and similar jollifications began, it is difficult to say, though it does not appear to have antedated the Civil war. As for shooting in the New Year, that seems to have been the custom—and strikingly so in Philadelphia, ever since the revolution.

When John Adams moved into the White House it was so incomplete that there was very little attempt to observe New Year's day at the mansion, nor in fact any other elaborate social affair. The celebration, as now observed, began with the administration of President Jefferson. On New Year's day in 1803 it is noted "On Saturday, New Year's day, the president was waited upon by diplomatic characters, the officers of the government, the members of the legislature, and the citizens generally. There were also present a large number of ladies." In 1804 the report contains the information that "the affair was rendered more agreeable by the accompaniment of the Marine and Italian bands."

At this second Jefferson reception "some time after the company had assembled, Colonel Burrows, at the head of the Marine corps, saluted the president, while the band of music played the president's march, went through the usual evolutions in a masterly manner, fired sixteen rounds in platoons, and concluded with a general 'feu-de-jolie'."

Naturally, with Dolly Madison as hostess, the New Year receptions during her husband's administration were brilliant, and at the last one, prior to the burning of the mansion, a guest wrote as follows: "Nothing ever was witnessed in Washington so brilliant and dazzling."

Every president since then has celebrated the dawn of the new year as an occasion for diplomatic courtesies, as well as an opportunity to give the public a chance to visit the White House and shake hands with the president.

First Observed by Romans.

The observance of January 1 as the beginning of the year we borrow from the Romans. The first Christian emperors kept up the custom of New Year's observance, though it tolerated and afforded the opportunity for idolatrous rites, but later the western church opposed three days of penitence and fasting to the Pagan celebration of January (A. D. 487). By degrees, however, the church, in the eighth century, abrogated the fast, and the earlier and more congenial jovial customs were gradually resumed and have continued to the present.

A NEW EXPERIENCE



The Young Year stood and blinked his eyes.

And gazed with wondering surprise Upon a sight so fine and new, He scarcely could believe it true. He gazed again, and still that sight Remained to fill him with delight. Until he asked what might this be, This thing of shining mystery.

"What can it be?" he eager asked. As still in that strange thing he basked "Which is so bright and big and fine, And feeling brings I can't define. But which my very heart makes glad, The greatest feeling I've yet had; And braces up my spirit so With all its warmth and shine and glow?"

"I never saw such sight before, And will I see it o'er and o'er? Or will it vanish like a dream, And not again upon me beam? What is this rare and radiant thing Which makes me want to dance and sing?"

The one he questioned answered: "Son, Don't you know what? Why, that's the sun."

NEW YEAR SOON GROWS OLD

Fades and Passes Just as All Things Earthly—Only the Spiritual Endures and Satisfies.

The heart-breaking thing about the New Year is that he becomes old. We run out to meet him today as he arrives rosy-cheeked, and ruddy, stamping his feet, drawing off his gloves, unbuckling his great coat and shaking off the snowflakes. How buoyant and hopeful he is! He has his pockets full of good things for us, we are sure. How he wins us! How he inspires us! We can do great things with him. He is so different from the old fellow who is gone. Poor Old Year! He got pretty stale toward the last. And then, too, we got so we didn't feel just comfortable with him. He had seen so many of our mistakes and failures. It will be easier to make a new start with him out of the way.

And now for this youngster! We shall keep the past from him. He shall not know a word of it. All his things are new. Ours shall be also, new words, new thoughts, new ways. Good-by, old things.

But even before our New Year's resolutions are all made, the New Year's day grows old. Light the candles; the day is dying. The shadows deepen. Our new New Year already is taking on age. We cannot keep him new; can we keep the new that he brought to us? In the first gloom of the new year we know that we cannot. The guests of the day are gone. The flowers we chose with such care are withering. The tempting feast—fragments. Is there no abiding thing? The old year was like this.

The old year was like it; the new year will be and years and years—all alike. Time is their body; their soul is eternity. And as they come one after the other they bring to us the gifts of their body and the gifts of their soul. The one waxes old and passes; the other endures and satisfies.

Welcome, New Year. Show us your good gifts and help us to choose among them such as you and the other years that come and go can leave with us until the perfect and unending day.

A New Year Reverie

New Year met me somewhat sad:
Old Year leaves me tired,
Stripped of favorite things I had,
Balked of much desired;
Yet farther on my road today,
God willing, farther on my way.

New Year coming on apace,
What have you to give me?
Bring you scathe, or bring you grace.
Face me with an honest face
You shall not deceive me:
Be it good or ill, be it what you will,
It needs shall help me on my road—
My rugged road to heaven, please God.

—Christina G. Rossetti.

Philosophical Rule the Best.

The world is holding its breath at its entrance into a new year. No one is wise enough to foresee what that year is going to hold. It will be a year of surprises, and the only rule for its conduct will be the old philosophical one of hoping for the best and preparing for the worst.

NEW YEAR BELLS

Custom of Ringing Them Originated in the Dim Past.

Believed to Have Been First Used About 400 A. D.—Chimes Thought to Be Possessed of Supernatural Power.

ALWAYS, everywhere in our land, we look to the ringing of bells to announce the death of the old year and the birth of the new. Not until we actually hear the bells ringing from the church steeples, somehow, do we really turn to each other and exclaim "Happy New Year!"

All of which brings us to the question of why people ring bells. They seem to have figured in the life of man way, way back in the dim and distant years. And they have been used to convey messages of various sorts to those within sound of their alarm.

Among the ancient Greeks those who made the nightly rounds of the camps and garrisons used to ring a bell at each sentinel post to make sure that the soldier on duty within was awake. They also put bells upon the necks of criminals to warn all people to avoid them. The Romans used bells to announce the hour of the bath.

It is believed that bells were first used in churches about 400 years after the birth of Christ. And by the twelfth century they were in common use in churches all over Europe. Most of these, however, were hand bells, made of thin plates of hammered iron, bent into a four-sided shape and fastened with rivets and bronzes. Then gradually, as people began to hang the bells in steeples and belfries, they became larger.

In 1734 a huge bell was cast in Moscow, Russia. It is over twenty-one feet in height and diameter and weighs 193 tons. The largest bell in America is in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, at Montreal, and weighs 29,400 pounds.

In all ages and all countries, the material most used in the manufacture of bells has been a mixture of two parts of copper to one of tin, called bronze. At present about thirteen parts of copper are used to four of tin. Bells have been made of iron, steel, gold, silver, brass and even of glass, though when made of glass they have been found too fragile for practical use.

Back in the old days, the people believed that bells possessed supernatural power; by ringing them at certain times, they believed, storms, pestilence and famine could be averted.

THE NEW YEAR.

The New Year—where it leads and whom concerning
We cannot see,
We scan the path and full our hearts of yearning
And mystery—
What will it yield, this lane of sudden turning
To you and me?

Grant we may find our share of sunlight streaming—
Come tears—come mirth:
Where faith in man shall make life's good deeds seeming
Of noble worth;
Give days our toil and give our night sweet dreaming,
God of the earth.

Give us the heart to tread this way, not knowing
A vale or height;
Give us cheer that God, his grace bestowing,
May guide us right;
Grant we may love the others with us going—
Old Year—Good-Night!

—Edith Livingston Smith, in Wisconsin Agriculturist.

NATURE SETS GOOD EXAMPLE

Discard Things That Hinder and Retain Only That Which Is Helpful at Dawn of New Year.

Once again the New Year opens its door for us to enter in. The old year is leaving us, and if we are wise we will let him take with him all the impediments that have handicapped us during his reign. We will dismiss the old mistakes and troubles and grudges, and entering blithely into the New Year, we will begin all over again.

Mother nature has set us an example which we will do well to follow. All the good golden grain, the ripe fruit and all other precious gifts she has permitted us to garner and retain. And then she proceeded to do away with the rubbish. She put her spell upon it and it withered and died, was plowed under, and became the needful fertilizer for another year.

And so all the good and sweet and beautiful things that the old year has given us are permitted to keep. We may hold onto our successes, our helpful experiences, our beautiful memories and the new friendships which have come to us as the gift of the old year, and let go of all the rubbish that might hinder our endeavor in the year that is just opening its door into new and untried ways.

Let us cast off our old garments of doubt and disappointment and failure, and put on the shining garments of hope and faith and courage. Let us draw on all the undreamed of sources within us for a broader outlook, a more determined endeavor and greater accomplishment. Let us possess ourselves of higher ideals of life and its privileges and responsibilities, and a determination to live up to the best there is in us during the days of the coming year. And above all, let us hold fast to our faith in the goodness of God, for so shall we be enabled to go forward, hopeful and unafraid into the unknown and untried ways of the New Year.

THE LOST CHANCES



Whenever I am starting out
Upon a fresh new year
I always stop to think about
The one no longer here,
The year that's dead I travel back
And let my memory run
In contemplation through the stack
Of things I could have done.

I check the deeds I meant to do—
With those I did, and find
That I neglected quite a few
Real chances to be kind.
I learn the words I meant to say
To comfort and to cheer,
And yet postponed them for a day,
I didn't speak that year.

And then to my disgrace I find
That had I paused to smile
And do those little actions kind
I'd not have lost a mile.
I learn now that the chance has gone
And I shall wish I had to tell
Where nothing may be hid
The many things I could have well
Have done, yet never did.

And when at last life is through—
And all my course is run,
In deep regret I shall review
The deeds I could have done,
And I shall wish I had to tell
Where nothing may be hid
The many things I could have well
Have done, yet never did.

AMONG NEW YEAR'S RICHES

Trials and Suffering a Part of Rich Heritage God Gives to Each of His Children.

Part of the rich heritage that God has planned for you in the New Year is suffering. He will permit in the life of each child of his a portion—just the right portion—of difficulty and trial and temptation. What we see in those trials and temptations will largely determine the riches that will be ours in this year. A Christian layman recently wrote to a friend:

"How fine it would be to go out in the opening year so yielded that every fresh circumstance or trial or temptation would prove to have the sweet face of Christ concealed in it, or bursting like a flood of glory through some rift in the cloud and filling with radiance our uplifted faces; so that each new obedience should be but the parting of the curtain, ushering us into new wonders and experiences of his inexhaustible riches and fullness. Old things would then be continually passing away, all things constantly becoming new."

What glories of abounding grace—that the worst Satan can do against the child of God in this New Year only furnishes a fresh opportunity for God to pour out the treasures of his unspeakable Gift! The promise to supply every need of ours "according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" is not a promise for the life to come, when all sorrow and sickness and temptation to evil will be at an end, but it is a promise made in full view of every trial and temptation that we shall meet today. Let us then count it all joy when we fall into our difficulties and trials, confidently remembering that along with each of them we have—Jesus.

Making a New Year.

The virtue of a New Year is not in its change of name. The first days of January are so exactly like the last days of December that we have to make a conscious and continued effort to write the proper date on our letters. If this is to be a New Year indeed, we must make it so ourselves, putting into it new hopes and ambitions, new resolutions and effect. The virtue of the New Year is in the new aspirations and persistence we bring to it.

Make Several.

One good New Year resolution deserves another.



AT TURN OF ROAD

Beginning of New Year Good Time for Retrospection.

Inspiration for All of Us in Realization That Things Which Worried and Saddened Were Only Trifles.

By WM. GEORGE JORDAN.

THE beginning of the new year is a natural, sharp turn in the road of time. Here we may wisely rest a while, and in the peace and quiet and calm of self-communion see the long stretch of the road of a single twelvemonth. It is built imperishably of short steps of living—from moment to moment.

Many of the purposes for which we labored and struggled, in our narrow, close, selfish absorption, seem petty and puny when seen from the turn of the road. The structure of some effort we thought marvellous is shown in its sickening sham as a hasty affair of show and pretense, made of stuff that could not stand the wear and tear and test of time. It was not built on square lines of character, of the best that was in us. It lacked strength, sincerity, simplicity. The material was made up of policy and selfishness put together on hurried plans. It was a failure; it cannot be rebuilt; but it is worth only a passing regret and a realization of the lesson of its non-success—at the turn of the road.

The look backward from the turn of the road should inspire us by making vivid to us how much of what we feared never came to pass. The tyranny of worry, that dominated us and held us for months trembling slaves to a weak fear, that dissipated our energy, dulled our thinking, and darkened our mental vision, at the very hours that should have given us fullest control of our best, is now seen as an enemy to true individual growth. It means a harder fight in the unending battle against worry and grief.

The broader view of life reveals that the only great things in life are trifles; that what pained us most, saddened our hearts, and turned our hopes to ashes were only trifles—cumulating into overwhelming importance. A cruel word, an unkindness, a little misunderstanding may darken a day and separate us from one we love or may petrify us into a mood of doubt and despair. The most joyous moments of life, the high lights in the pictures of memory, may too be only trifles of kindness, fine expressions of love, simple tributes of confidence and trust that make the very heart smile—as we remember.

Nature is constantly giving us new turns of the road. It may be a birthday or some general anniversary in the cycle of the year. It may be some red-letter day in the private calendar of our emotions or some date eloquent to us as telling of some joyous "first" or some pathetic "last" time in the sacred diary of the heart. It may be a supreme sorrow, an agonizing sense of loss, the coming of a great joy, the closing of some epoch in our lives, the proving of the actuality of something too awful for us even to have feared, some exultant half-hour that changes irrevocably all our living. These and numberless other days, hours or single moments may bring us alone to—the turn of the road.

Then may come one of those rare moments of life, of fine spiritual discernment, of luminous revelation, of coming to one's highest self, when the sordid, the mean, the temporary, the selfish are stripped in an instant of their garish shams and tinsel. Then the real, the true, the eternal stand out in their majesty, bathed in the splendor and glow of the revealing of truth. In such a spirit the very tangle of the inspiration of the infinite fills us. We seem born again to new, better and greater things, for we have seen the divine vision—at the turn of the road.

EXPEDIENCY.



"Have you decided on your New Year resolutions?"

"Yes; I'm going to give up all my expensive habits."

"For how long?"

"Until I get my holiday bills paid and can afford them again."

Moral—Don't Be Too Good.

It certainly is embarrassing, with New Year's day coming around year after year, to have no bad habits to swear off.

Keep a Few.

Reserve a few good resolutions for January thirty-first. You may need them.

To the Old Year

By PATIENCE WORTH

We part, oh comrade, reluctantly;
Long have we trod the winding way,
Troubled, clouded, grayed—
Aye the shadowed way.
Adieu! We part, oh comrade! Adieu!
Upon thy way I see thee going,
Bent and weary. Thy steps
Are stepped most falteringly.

Adieu, oh comrade! We part—
Thou upon thy way and I upon mine,
I have seen thy brothers slain;
I have watched thine eyes streaming;
I have seen thee stop upon thy way
To stanch some bleeding thing;
Smiling wisely, bending tenderly.
But thou art weary now—
Bent and weary. Thy steps
Are stepped most falteringly.

Adieu! With thee upon thy path,
Oh, wilt thou take the memory
Of one brother upon the other's flesh?
Oh, wilt thou then turn
And smile me back one smile of fellow-ship?

I see my aged form sink low,
I would burden thee not, save of my loves
Nor would I hang upon thy brow
A garland of glistering green
That flasheth scarlet bud.
Nay, 'twould be as a skull
Wreathed of victor's laurel—
A folly-crown upon thy most venerable brow.

Adieu, oh comrade! Upon thy path!
The years that come are beckoning me;
But I shall recall thy burdens,
Thy sorrows, thy tendernesses.
Aye, and, oh, wilt thou turn upon thy path
And smile a smile of fellowship,
Oh, parting year?

DOCUMENTARY PROOF.



"What have you there?"
"Merely a few New Year resolutions."

"I presume you wrote them down so you wouldn't forget them?"
"No. My wife made me write them down so she wouldn't forget them."

GOOD RESOLVES FOR WOMEN

Suggestions Pertinent to New Year That Will Make Home More Cheerful and Comfortable.

So many people, in making their New Year resolutions think only of their diets, their characters, and their pocketbooks! Their homes, which, directly or indirectly, influence all these things, are dissociated in their minds with anything pertaining to the New Year and the fresh page that is just turning over. But when each woman stops to think that her home may be made so attractive that her menfolk, without knowing the reason, will want to spend their evenings there; that her children will grow up with higher ideals, and will always keep a beautiful memory of what home means; that she herself will walk with her head well up, and her shoulders back, as she sallies forth to take her place in the world of men, knowing in her heart that her home is as it should be—since home is such a sacred place, shall we not include the word in the list of our desires and strivings? Shall we not resolve to make it worthy of our life and love?

Have you a chair that squeaks as you sit down upon it? Why not mend it? Have you mended that ripped hem in your couch cover? Have you tacked down that loose place in your hall carpet? Are you not tired of looking at your pillows which need recovering? When are you going to get at cleaning off that smoky place on your ceiling? Little repairs like these work wonders in the home. Why not get at them this next week?

Have you a room which does not please you? Why not experiment with the furniture and see if you cannot place it to greater advantage, or so that it will give greater comfort? Often the arrangement of a room is responsible for its lack of charm.

Does your woodwork need repainting? Why not start to paint it a little at a time? In so doing the time spent is never missed and wet paint in small areas is easier to steer around.

Have you too many ornaments in your house? Why not pack some of them carefully away, and see how you like doing without them? Your rooms would be happier.

Start Life Anew.

If your life was not what it should have been last year, leave the old life behind with the old year and start anew.

One Drawback.

One of the drawbacks of New Year's resolutions is that it cuts down the hating average for the season.

'A PASSING CLOUD'

By MRS. LIZZIE M. PEABODY.

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From among her many suitors Merry, Dayton had chosen Judd Bentley, an honest, capable and dependable young farmer, and they were very happy as together they came one afternoon in October, when the woodland trees were a blaze of color, to the homestead farm, where they were to live after their wedding in the spring, and began clearing the grounds by pulling up cornstalks, squash vines and tall weeds and placing them with other unsightly rubbish in piles ready for the torch. Merry loved the old place, and after tugging at the last huge cornstalk and placing it with the others she looked about the fields and then said thoughtfully: "Judd, do you know that to me the homestead farm, with its fine old trees and its glimpses of the shining, ever-moving river, is the prettiest spot in all the world!"

He straightened up from his work to look at her, and with clever mimicry, his dark eyes twinkling roguishly, cried: "Merry, do you know that to me, you with your pink cheeks, blue eyes and the little yellow rings clustering about your temple, are the prettiest girl in all the world?" Merry's happy laugh was contagious, for Judd laughed, and a little bird daintily swooping on a near-by bush burst into a shower of melody. Soon after they started for home, and at Merry's gate Judd said good-by, as he was to start on a business trip which would keep him away for a week.

On the evening he was expected home, long before he came in sight, Merry sat at the window watching behind the curtains and smilingly waited at the open door as he came up the gravelled path, but the gay wave of the hand, the bright smile, and the happy, eager look in his eyes to which she was accustomed were missing. His greeting appeared to be forced and anxiously she asked, "Are you ill?" "No," he replied, but conversation lagged and she was still regarding him with puzzled eyes when he abruptly asked, "Where is your engagement ring, Merry?" In his eyes appeared to be smoldering sparks and in his voice a tone which was strange to her. Glancing at her ringless hands, her face reddened, but she answered quietly, "I cannot tell you." "Cannot or will not?" he queried. "Cannot," she repeated evenly. His eyes, smoldering no longer, were ablaze with anger, as he said hoarsely: "Then I'll tell you!" "Ray Collins has it and today he told me that he had taken it from your finger with your consent. Is it so?" His eyes begged her to deny it, but mastering herself with an effort which made both face and lips white she said calmly, "You have made a statement which you evidently believe to be true, but you are very angry. Let us talk about it at another time." "Let us talk now," he said protestingly. "Tonight I go away again for a few days." "I cannot talk now," she said, "and in a few days the matter may adjust itself."

"Very well," he said quietly, "expect me next Wednesday." And soon after he went away.

"I have never given him reason to believe such a thing of me," Merry sobbed, "and how could he speak so angrily to me?" But soon she said softly and hopefully, "I will search again for the ring. All may yet be well."

Trying days passed, but Wednesday afternoon found Merry at the window, both longing for and dreading Judd's coming. Again she was surprised; for he came up the path with springing step and smiling face, and caught her in his arms. "Judd!" she exclaimed joyfully, "you have found out the truth about the ring?"

"Wrong!" he cried with smiling indifference. "I haven't seen or heard of it since I saw you, but I have been thinking, and I know you are not the sort of a girl who would do a thing like that."

"I hoped you would say that," Merry said happily, "and now I will tell you what I can about the ring."

"Not unless you choose," he quickly interrupted. "For you and me the affair is settled, but I shall soon see Ray," he added grimly.

"The evening you went away," she began, "I finished doing some canning and preserving I had begun, and I had put away the jars and carried out the fruit and vegetable waste before I missed my ring. Since then I have searched everywhere without finding it. Ray's sister must have told him of my loss, and although I did not think of it while you were here, the greater part of his story is probably true."

He looked at her inquiringly, and, blushing, she continued: "Ray once brought a ring to me, and slipped it on my finger, while he proposed, but I refused, and asked him to remove it. It was very nearly, or perhaps exactly like the one you afterward gave me."

Judd broke the silence by saying: "You will never forgive me."

"Yes I will," she returned cheerily, "and now let us go to the homestead farm. We are always happy there."

Having arrived, they set fire to the rubbish pile, and in the furrow from which Merry had pulled the last huge stalk, they found the glistering ring. Judd caught it and placed it on her finger. "I have been all kinds of a fool," he declared, "if ever I cut up like that again, just hold up that flag."

"'Twas but a passing cloud. Let us forget it and enjoy the sunshine," Merry said.

